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C.S.H.P.
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INFILTRATION AND RESUPPLY OF AGENTS

IN NORTH KOREA, 1952-1953

Vol I

E + E

Draft

by 

December 1972

AirForce/Haas/Korean War 51-53
HS [Mar 95/KCRuffner]
Doc. # 2 ; page 1 of 15 pp.

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II. C. 3. Evasion and Escape Activitiesa. Background

The first Evasion and Escape (E&E) program in Korea was initiated on 7 September 1950 at the request of General Partridge, Fifth Air Force. For that program [redacted] agents were trained in E&E techniques [redacted] and on 22 October 1950, [redacted] four-man teams were ready for launching into North Korea. The E&E program was cancelled on 27 October 1950 by the Joint Planning Committee, composed of four representatives from G-2 and one each from Far East Air Force (FEAF), ^{United States Navy} USN, and CIA [redacted] upon the recommendation of FEAF "in view of the fact that neither time nor space was at the time available to place the program into operation." General Charles A. Willoughby froze all E&E assets by directive dated 4 November 1950. CIA offered to turn over the E&E assets to General Partridge in a letter dated 1 December 1950, submitted to Colonel Svensson, Chief, JSOB. At a meeting of the JSOB on 3 December 1950, it was decided that all CIA E&E assets would be made available to General Partridge and a new E&E program would be established. The Agency sent [redacted] new agents [redacted] for E&E training. Remaining assets from the initial program

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were also reassembled. All teams already trained were transferred to Korea for launching preparations. On 5 December confirmation was received that [REDACTED] teams were operating in the Pyongyang area.

By 1 February 1951, under the second program, of [REDACTED] men available, [REDACTED] were operating as teams in the field, [REDACTED] were awaiting launching from Pusan, and [REDACTED] were in training [REDACTED]. The men who had been launched were dropped in the teeth of the unexpected Chinese invasion and retreat of the UN forces. They were dropped without reception committees and sufficient operational data. [REDACTED] rescues *reported to have been* were made during the second program, but all the teams except one [REDACTED] were either lost or exfiltrated.

By March 1951, instead of using four-man teams, the Agency developed an E&E program based on general resistance warfare groups with greater ability to receive local support and to stay behind the lines indefinitely. The first large resistance/guerrilla program, [REDACTED] was therefore expanded to include E&E as an objective. A case officer was provided on the west coast of Korea for the specific purpose of briefing the G-3, EUSAK guerrilla teams on

the principles of E&E.^{44/} As of 28 January 1952, the first E&E program was credited with 15 rescues-- seven British and eight American. A cable [REDACTED] dated 28 January 1952, stated the above number was based on those rescues that could be proved.^{45/}*

[REDACTED] informed Headquarters on 8 May 1952 that Major Walter F. Keating, Chief, E&E Division, FEAF, had requested permission through G-2 to implement FEAF E&E behind-the-lines facilities. The Air Force's reasons for its intentions were given as the failure of other agencies in Korea to produce satisfactory results, FEAF's belief it could direct the formation of E&E facilities and produce satisfactory results, and the denial that E&E activities could work as a secondary mission to resistance teams or intelligence collection.^{46/}

On 17 May 1952, [REDACTED] informed Headquarters that General Everest, Commanding General of the Fifth Air Force (FAF), was behind ^{the} Air Force's intentions. The Air Force wanted to purchase fishing vessels, equipped with radios and manned by Koreans, to ply the west coast of North Korea to exfiltrate downed pilots. General Banfill, A-2, FEAF, told [REDACTED] that he had taken it up with Washington and that the

*That claim was later disputed. ^{Chp IV-B-3-a} See page 382.

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Air Force was going into business by default. [REDACTED] noted that CCRAK had assumed full responsibility for direction and control of E&E activities in Korea but depended upon the Agency's Korea Mission for experienced personnel, which the Mission lacked. It was [REDACTED] position that CCRAK had been established on orders of the Commander in Chief, Far East (CINCFE) and applied alike to FEAF, FAF, and the Agency's Korea Mission. If FEAF had funds and personnel to take over control, then those assets should be made available and coordinated by CCRAK as long as the CINCFE directive was in effect.
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Supplemental, Please
A memorandum to the DCI from the (DDP) stated that the failure of CCRAK to coordinate E&E adequately could have prompted the Air Force's concern. CCRAK had so far been purely a paper organization with respect to E&E and had been mistrusted from the beginning by the Air Force which regarded the organization as an attempted encroachment on its jurisdiction by G-2, FECOM. The Air Force was aware that CIA had to coordinate all its E&E activities through CCRAK. The Air Force was also probably responding to pressures from increasingly substantial losses, from decreased E&E assets which had resulted from intensified enemy

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countermeasures in the winter months, and from the danger of a renewed and enlarged conflict. The action by the Air Force resulted in additional Agency personnel being sent to assist CCRAK.^{48/}

E&E efforts in Korea had been hampered by the rugged terrain ~~of the country~~ which had possibly the highest security density of any country. Planes that had been downed were mostly in areas of the greatest security concentration--main supply routes, front lines, and MIG Alley near the Yalu (between Sinanju and the Manchurian border). There had been a lack of coordination among the US services in Korea responsible for E&E activities.^{49/}

At a CCRAK meeting on 19 May 1952 to discuss Korean E&E matters, [REDACTED] CIA representative, briefed the group on CIA E&E assets, projects, and potential and proposed that the Air Force contribute to an expansion of existing assets through CCRAK rather than implement an additional operation in an already overcrowded area. Colonel Dougherty, A-2 FAF, replied that the Air Force did not plan to bypass CCRAK and would implement its own program through CCRAK if CIA/CCRAK continued to fail to produce. [REDACTED] proposed incorporating Dougherty's plan, that of using

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fishing boats as permanent floating island bases, with CIA assets. It was agreed that the group would study the proposition for joint operations.^{50/}

The Agency proposed a plan using [REDACTED] smaller faster craft with two alternates, for which it would recruit the crews and indigenous radio operators, and provide signal plans, equipment, and a 50-ton mother ship. The Agency would also be responsible for fishing cover in Inchon and for land contacts. FAF was to provide personnel who might be needed and technical assistance. Air and Navy were also responsible for protection in cases of air or sea attack.^{51/} It was estimated that the program would require a minimum of [REDACTED]^{52/} Headquarters approved the plan on Project 27 May 1952, under the scope of [REDACTED]. The field was authorized to make necessary expenditures to initiate the program if it was approved by the other services.^{53/}

On 24 May 1952, Headquarters informed the field that the British ^{Royal Air Force} (RAF) was considering the possibility of moving [REDACTED] officers and men to Korea to devote full time to E&E operations. Their proposal to drop British officers behind enemy lines was considered rather unrealistic.^{54/} There were more than 1,000 British prisoners of war in North Korea at the time.

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USAF submitted informally to CIA for comment a draft prepared for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, dated 24 May 1952, of a proposed plan for establishing a USAF Evasion and Escape Unit in Korea, which included active participation by British officers. The paper recommended the formation of the proposed E&E unit to overcome the serious lack of E&E effectiveness in the Korean theater. Little had been achieved to aid UN personnel who had been shot down or cut off from their units. Only a small number had been assisted by clandestine organizations, and no contact had yet been made with prisoner of war camps and no persons were known to have escaped. E&E responsibilities in Korea lay with the military services for training and briefing combat personnel and providing them with suitable equipment, and with CIA for creating and operating agent mechanisms, contacting prisoner of war camps and making clandestine attempts to effect evasions and escape. The paper maintained that the clandestine guerrilla operations had not been successful, mainly because the clandestine potential in North Korea was also expended on tasks which were operationally more important, such as intelligence gathering, subversion and sabotage, which by their nature attracted

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substantial enemy counterreactions not conducive to
E&E activities. ^{55/}

A memorandum was issued by CCRAK on 31 May 1952⁶ outlining the E&E planning responsibilities. The responsibility for planning and coordinating E&E operations was delegated within CCRAK to the Deputy Commander, CCRAK, effective that date. It was pointed out that in implementing specific E&E operations the primary consideration was rescue, using a combination of overt and covert means. The CCRAK E&E staff, through the Operations Officer, CCRAK, was to coordinate E&E efforts and capabilities within the various CCRAK agencies. All cover ⁻⁷ E&E activities were to be exclusively CIA's field of responsibility, and all covert E&E activities of other agencies were to be phased out. Existing CCRAK E&E assets whether covert or overt were to be made available for E&E missions as required by the Deputy Commander, CCRAK. ^{56/}

An interim E&E Committee was activated on 14 June 1952 by Chief of Mission, Korea, in his capacity as Deputy, CCRAK. The committee had three regular members, one from Army G-2, one from FEAF, and one from the Agency. The Deputy, CCRAK, was primarily responsible for E&E within CCRAK and delegated that

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responsibility under his supervision to the Agency's CCRAK representative, [REDACTED] who was named chairman of the committee. There were three invitational members: the Navy CCRAK representative, the FAF E&E officer, and the G-2, EUSAK representative. Seven proposals on the conduct of E&E operations were submitted to the committee members ~~for consideration~~ ^{57/} for approval. S

On 27 June 1952, the E&E proposals of the Interim E&E Committee were accepted and were acted upon immediately.^{58/} On 5 July 1952, Headquarters cabled the field that the Mission's accomplishments under pressure and with limited assets were commendable but warned against overextending its personnel and assets to the detriment of other higher priority Korea Mission programs.^{59/}

A memorandum for Deputy Director (Plans) from [REDACTED] Acting Assistant Director for Policy Coordination, dated 31 July 1952, recommended that the E&E unit proposed by USAF (a third draft of which had been submitted by Air Force, dated 23 June 1952) be concurred in, provided that:

- (1) It is understood that this action applies only to E&E activities in North Korea.

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(2) The Military Services form a Joint Services Unit, in which CIA will participate, to assume the primary responsibility for E&E.

(3) The activities of the Joint Services Unit are subject to appropriate supervision and coordination (presumably by CCRAK) to the end that there shall be no conflict with other behind-the-lines activities in North Korea.

Certain operational concepts outlined in the document were also to be specified as responsibilities which, by their very nature, must be centralized in CIA Headquarters, Washington. ^{60/}

In a cable to the field, dated 29 August 1952, Headquarters noted that Chief of Mission, Korea, had assigned the E&E responsibility to the Chief, Intelligence, instead of to the Chief, Paramilitary, where Headquarters felt the jurisdiction lay because of extensive practical and theoretical justifications. Headquarters added that the E&E assignment should be a temporary one under intelligence operations until conditions permitted the responsibility to be properly assigned. ^{61/}

A conference was held on 13 and 15 October 1952 in Tokyo by representatives of ^{Far East Command / Liaison Group} (FEC/LG), ^{Commander, Naval Force, FE} COMNAVFE, FFAF, FAF, and CCRAK, [REDACTED] to discuss a covert boat program under CCRAK. The responsibility for

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procurement, maintenance, and operational supervision of the program was placed on COMNAVFE, which in turn established Task Force 96.8 for compliance, [REDACTED] told the conference that the Agency's covert boat requirements were estimated in May 1952 when the Agency was given the responsibility for E&E for air. All vessels that were required had been purchased, fitted, and placed into operation during the previous four months, and there was no current or foreseeable need for additional covert boats. All Agency assets were purchased from its own funds and represented an investment of about [REDACTED]. The boats did not come under the control of the Navy since they had not been purchased through the Navy E&E fund of \$2,500,000. The Agency expected, however, to use Navy maintenance facilities on a reimbursable basis. It was agreed that during hostilities vessels would use military cover rather than civilian/commercial cover, since the vessels would be used under military and/or naval control. At the end of hostilities, the vessels would become the Agency's responsibility. They would be placed on public sale as surplus and the Agency could obtain those it wanted [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Captain C. J.

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Zonderak, COMNAVFE, said that the \$2,500,000 for the program originated from Defense Department's funds and carried the stipulation that all remaining assets would revert to CIA upon cessation of hostilities. The actual procurement, disposition, and operational use of the vessels during hostilities would be the responsibility of the Navy and Commander in Chief, FECOM, during which time CIA would have no responsibility over the program. 62/

Headquarters cabled the field on 4 November 1952, criticizing Korea Mission's role in E&E operations in northwest Korea. Headquarters was concerned that the Mission was engaging too much in semiovert activities, such as directing indigenous craft for sea rescue and coastal pickups, and using paraescorts instead of limiting the E&E effort to CIA's charter responsibility of covert E&E. The field was requested to review CIA's E&E position in Korea and discuss E&E responsibilities with CINCFE and commanders of the appropriate services. CIA's position was that Korea Mission had primary responsibility for only covert E&E. 63/

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IV. B. 3. Evasion and Escape Activities

a. Foreword

The cease-fire of 27 July 1953 forced a complete reassessment and reorganization of E&E operations and personnel. The goal was to reorganize into a security-tight efficient functioning project capable of producing a higher level intelligence product as its secondary mission. The primary effort was directed toward the development of additional nets in the geographic areas into which the largest number of aircraft went down during the three years of hostilities in North Korea. In the event of the resumption of hostilities the project would be ready to continue its covert pilot recovery program.

The cessation of military air operations and the initiation of exchange of prisoners of war removed the immediate E&E requirement. UN withdrawal from North Korean coastal waters and from islands along the coast resulted in immediate evidence of increased enemy coastal patrol, specifically high-speed boats. Although the [REDACTED] Branch had made only limited use of air as an infiltration means, prohibition of all overflights because of the cease-fire suspended air operations indefinitely and forced the use of overland routes through enemy lines for E&E operations. By

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The following comment on the E&E program was made by NAC in December 1953:

The E&E program in Korea was of such magnitude and scope that it could only have been best accomplished by a truly joint effort by all the services and CIA. At no time during the period of the Korean war was there a truly concerted effort by all the services and CIA in E&E activity. 88/

In an analysis of [REDACTED] study of Korean operations, dated 14 December 1953, it was stated that it was doubtful that CIA could take credit even in small part for the rescue of the 15 airmen.* At best, the Agency's contributions were that of developing awareness on the part of the persons concerned of opportunities for rescuing airmen and the means of survival in enemy territory. 89/

The Korea Mission's E&E program was terminated as of 30 September 1954. A critique of the E&E effort in Korea from August 1950 through August 1954 was prepared by [REDACTED] who was the case officer when the E&E project was terminated. (See Attachment ^{E-4} ~~No. 4, Tab. II.~~)

*See ~~page 162.~~ Chap. II-C-3-a.

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